National Park Service "Organic Act"

"There is created in the Department of the Interior a service to be called the National Park Service, which shall be under the charge of a director.... The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified, except as are under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army, as provided by law, by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment for the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Signed by President Woodrow Wilson August 25, 1916

Stamp

National Park Service Office of the Centennial Coordinator PO Box 25287 Denver, CO 80225 U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service





National Park Centennial Initiative: America's Listening Sessions

Public and partners asked to help craft vision for the next century

A message from

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne

Welcome. I want to thank you for taking the time to learn about the National Park Centennial Initiative



vision for the future of our national parks. The 100th anniversary of the National Park Service isn't until August 25, 2016, but there is much work ahead to prepare for a centennial celebration.

and to share with us your

President Bush, on the 90th anniversary of the National Park Service, directed me to "invite and receive suggestions from those who desire to

preserve the scenic, cultural, historical, geological and recreational values of our national parks." Listening sessions provide the ideal venue to accomplish this purpose.

The results of tonight's listening session and additional comments we receive online or through the mail in the next few weeks are important to the future of our nationwide system of national parks, monuments, trails and memorials. By taking part, you will help guide staff at the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service in making decisions about the shape and structure of the Centennial Initiative.

National parks preserve majestic natural wonders. They keep watch over hallowed battlefields. They keep culture alive at sites dedicated to the performing arts, poetry and music. Parks offer recreation and discovery through spectacular backcountry hiking and climbing. They honor great leaders like Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Chief Joseph, John Muir, Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, Jr. As havens of enjoyment, recreation, learning and personal renewal, national parks must endure.

In his message last August, the President wrote: "Americans take great pride in our country's natural and historic treasures, and the National Park Service plays an important role in ensuring

our rich heritage is preserved and enjoyed for generations to come."

National Park Service Director Mary Bomar, British-born and American by choice, told me that back in 1912, British Ambassador James Bryce called our parks "the best idea America ever had." Ambassador Bryce understood the power our



NPS Director Mary A. Bomar

national parks have to unite Americans. Billions of visitors have come to the same conclusion.

"I call on all Americans to help in these efforts and to enhance our parks as we get ready for the National Park Service's centennial celebration."

President George W. Bush

U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service





The National Park Centennial Initiative is:

A 10-year plan to invigorate national parks and to:

- Engage all Americans in preserving our heritage, history and natural resources though philanthropy and partnerships;
- Reconnect people with their parks and
- Build capacity for critical park operations and facilities, and sustain them through the next century.

A centerpiece of the President's proposed Fiscal Year 2008 National Park Service budget, the Centennial Initiative is designed to provide up to \$3 billion for investment in our system of national parks, trails, memorials and historic sites.

"This is money above and beyond our regular annual budget," said Mary Bomar, Director of the National Park Service. "It includes \$100 million of additional operating funds for parks each year and up to \$200 million a year for signature projects and programs."



The \$200 million a year would come in two parts. The President proposes up to \$100 million a year to match \$100 million in donations to the National Park Service.

The first order of business for the Centennial Initiative is to select signature projects and programs—and establish specific performance goals—to help prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment.

President Bush asked Secretary Kempthorne and Director Bomar to listen to comments from people, and our partners, who care about our national parks.

Questions for Discussion:

Imagine you, your children, or future generations enjoying national parks in 2016 and beyond. What are your hopes and expectations?

What role do you think national parks should play in the lives of Americans and visitors from around the world?

What are the signature projects and programs that you think should be highlighted for completion over the next 10 years?

What is a Signature Project or Program?

Signature projects can include anything from restoring historic structures and landscapes, renovating museums and visitor centers, integrating emerging technologies, improving trails and recreational opportunities, to connecting children to their national parks.

Signature projects and programs will:

- Continue the National Park Service's legacy of leveraging philanthropic, partnership and government investments to benefit national parks and their visitors;
- Capture the imagination of the public;
- Provide a margin of excellence;
- Secure at least a 1:1 philanthropic match;
- Use current staffing unless staff is provided through endowed positions or partners;
- Be sustainable in design, material and location.

For Centennial Initiative information or to comment online please visit us at www.nps.gov/2016

I'd like to take part in the Centennial Initiative and planning for the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. Based on the discussion questions provided, here are my comments about the future of America's national parks.

Mail-in comments must be received by April 2, 2007.
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